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**Oral Testimony as prepared**  
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**House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Hearing**

Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. Together we are tackling the worst public health crisis in over 100 years and a financial crisis deeper than all previous economic disrupters combined our industry has faced in its 100 year history.

In the absence of a federal plan until recent days under the Biden Administration, I want to recognize the airline industry for working with unions on safety measures such as required mask policies for airports and airplanes.

Receiving backing from the federal government on these mask requirements makes all the difference for Flight Attendants, Passenger Service Agents, and TSA Officers who are tasked to ensuring travelers comply. It has been difficult and combative at times without clear instruction to the public. We applaud FAA Administrator Steve Dickson for his strong statements and emergency order to make clear there will be no second chances for passengers who fail to comply with crewmember instructions that keep everyone safe. Violators will face the federal penalties of up to \$35,000 and imprisonment. This zero tolerance policy is in effect through the end of March and we encourage the FAA to extended it.

Aviation is critical for vaccine distribution, and the people on the frontlines of aviation need priority vaccination. We encourage the federal government to set up vaccination clinics at major airports to make it easy for airline crewmembers to access both their first and second doses. This will maximize the efficacy of the vaccine and prevent wasted doses.

Until we can contain the virus and fully open our economy, the airline industry will continue to operate at massive losses. The good news is that with the support of this committee and Chairman DeFazio leading the way, we created the first federal relief program that is truly Workers First, which covered 2.1 million workers in the CARES Act through September 30, 2020. When it was not extended, furloughs, separations, and no paid status began on Oct. 1st - affecting hundreds of thousands of workers and those still working.

The late December emergency relief continued the same requirements of the original CARES Act PSP:

No furloughs/layoffs and reinstatement of pay as of December 1 thru March 31;

No cuts to hourly wage rates;  
Maintain/restore service to all communities;  
Cap exec comp for 2 years after relief period;  
And Ban stock buybacks and dividends.

This #WorkersFirst plan we hoped would be a template for relief across other industries. It looks much like the successful programs we've seen in Europe, except that in this country it's even more valuable because healthcare is also tied to employment.

We need an extension of the PSP through September 30, 2021, with \$15 billion in payroll support – and we thank this committee for promoting this as part of the COVID relief package Congress is working to secure in the coming weeks for the American people.

The program is the best use of the public's money because it uses the payroll systems at the airlines and contractors already in place. Workers continue to pay taxes, supporting their cities' and states' tax base, continue SSI contributions, Medicare and more. It also means that all of the benefits that will support a longterm recovery and stability remain in place. Healthcare, pension/retirement contributions, sick leave, and other protections remain in place.

When the program lapsed, furlough cause certification and security credentials to lapse too. Nearly three months of furloughs caused a four month recovery of the credentials to get everyone back to work. Without an extension, this problem will grow exponentially.

Airline workers are getting back in place to support vaccine distribution and recovery. We support 1 in 14 jobs in the country. PSP supports the best public health decisions - no cost-cutting strains on safety and health policies. In the longterm, Airline balance sheets are already loaded up on debt. Debt heavy balance sheets will lag recovery and create downward pressure on good jobs - and hurt consumers.

There are endless arguments about why PSP makes sense on a government balance sheet.

But this is really about the people. The Flight Attendant who sought this union job because she had Chron's Disease and needed regular preventive care in order to live a normal life, but who without it becomes so ill she can't even look for another job. The Flight Attendant who cares for elderly parents and whose sister and her husband lost their jobs during COVID but have children to provide for so the entire family moved in together and he became the soul provider thanks to PSP. The Flight Attendant who was forced to work more during the furloughs because in a cost cutting environment productivity is driven high. She was displaced from her home base and had to spend more time on an airplane to get to work out of Philadelphia instead of Phoenix. She lost her life to COVID just in the last week.

Furloughs disproportionately affected women and people of color and force an older workforce to leave home for work with greater risks of serious effects of the virus.

Aviation has a long history of collaboration among government, industry, unions, scientists, and consumers. We can beat COVID and emerge stronger. Let's do this right.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.